

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Method and apparatus for steering a beam of light. The method and apparatus are based on the discovery that the spectral dispersion of multi-chromatic light pulses by an acousto-optical deflector can be significantly ameliorated by positioning a dispersive element, such as a prism, along the path of the multi-chromatic light pulses in such a way that the dispersive element disperses the multi-chromatic light pulses in a direction opposite to the spectral dispersion caused by the acousto-optical deflector. The dispersive element may be positioned either before or after the acousto-optical deflector. The method and apparatus are particularly well-suited for use with ultrashort laser pulses in the visible and infrared ranges having a bandwidth of up to about 40 nm. The method and apparatus have applicability in, among other things, multi-photon laser scanning microscopy.